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Congo News Letter

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CONGO NEWS LETTER

Vol. L MARCH 1958 No. 1

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IN MEMORIAM

Pierre Disu : *Chef Medaille*

IN a copy of "Actualities Africaines", a section of the Léopoldville daily paper, *l'Avenir*, which we recently received, one of the leading articles was captioned, "*Le territoire de Madimba a perdu un grand homme.*" (Madimba territory has lost an important man.) This referred to the death of Pierre Disu whose picture as medal chief appeared with the article.

Some will remember Disu chiefly by their knowledge of him in his later years when he had lost much of his physical and mental vigor but my remembrance of him is of a chief who had more influence for good than any other we knew in the District of Madimba.

In looking over papers I came across an article I wrote about him over twenty years ago entitled : "A Christian Chief has a Happy Day," It seemed to me that this might be published again that our recent missionaries to the Congo and the Church at Home might know something about this remarkable man.

There are many things which could be said about Disu that were omitted in this article but one of these I should like to mention here. It was his keen interest in the youth of his village. He wished to make school attractive to the boys of Boko, and to this end, at his request, I ordered out band instruments from England. When the Administrator at Madimba expected a visit from an important official he would ask Disu to have his band on hand to welcome that person.

Disu met many obstacles with great courage and in a loving spirit — obstacles because he was a Protestant, and as a Protestant he felt that each individual had a right to choose his own religion. Obstacles also from traders, white and Congolese, who were jealous of his success in trading. But Disu had many firm friends : Congolese who knew he could not be bribed and believed he would give a just decision in their case; the missionaries at Sona Bata who banked on his integrity, and most of the Belgian Administrators.

And amongst men in the trading world he could count as his friends were such men as Jules Van Lancker (late owner of many plantations, stores etc.) and Mr. Peree.

Disu's children and grandchildren may go farther than he in the religious and social progress of the race but if they do, we trust they will give great credit to him for helping them to bridge from the old Congo which is so swiftly passing to the new Congo which we hope will be dominated by the Spirit of Christ.

— P. A. MacDiarmid

A CHRISTIAN CHIEF HAS A HAPPY DAY

(*written in 1936*)

By P. A. MacDiarmid.

A LITTLE over forty years ago the first white man came to the village of Boko in the Sona Bata field where a small boy named Disu lived. The white man's name was Frederickson but as the natives could not pronounce that name, and as the man was always talking about Nzambi (God) they called him Mundeli waNzambi (The White Man of God). He had started mission work at Kifwa which was afterwards moved to Sona Bata.

Disu had heard about these white men. Some said they had come to get the spirits of the black people and to carry them off to the white man's land beyond the sea. Others said they were seeking a land where there was no death. The first statement did not tally very well with what they were hearing about this man and his wife, for several had brought word that they were using strong fetich medicine that made many sick people well. Still the people of Boko felt they had better keep aloof for fear of what might happen in their town.

Then one day Mr. Frederickson came to Boko with a few of the boys who were in his school. The people of the town watched him from a distance. Kikwakwa and Bangu and the other boys who were with Mr. Frederickson set to work to put up his tent for he was to remain there over night. In the evening he called to the people that he wanted to tell them about the Words of God which were written in a Book he carried everywhere

with him. But the people still kept their distance for their experience of God led them to think that He might strike them dead when He was angry but that He would not help them in their troubles. When Mr. Frederickson's boys began to sing a hymn this was too much for their curiosity, so they began to crowd around to listen. However, when the white man closed his eyes and began to pray their fears returned. Perhaps his spirit had left his body and was seeking to get control over their spirits; so they slipped away to their houses as quietly as possible. On opening his eyes Mr. Frederickson found that his audience had vanished and only his school boys were left. But this did not stop the missionary from visiting their village and it was not very long before Disu and some of the other boys wanted to goto the mission school so that they could read the BOOK as Bangu and Kikwakwa were able to do.

On Sunday July 12th., 1936, Pierre Disu stood before an audience of from 1200 to 1500 people and told the foregoing story of how the Gospel Message entered into their village and into their hearts. Gray-haired, with a dignity that is partly native and partly the result of the positions of authority and influence he occupies, he stood before the people — a product of Christian Missions. Through the years Pierre Disu has been greatly respected by white men and black for his honesty, his integrity, and his love of justice. The Government has made him supreme chief over twenty or more villages, as well as head of the Native Tribunal at the State Poste. The Administrateur has found this man's knowledge of native customs so accurate, and his decisions so fair, that he often sends him forty or fifty miles out into the territory to judge difficult cases between villages. To reach these places he has bought a second-hand Ford sedan.

Disu is also the wealthiest native trader in that section of the country. Formerly he had a chain of little shops but such high taxes were levied that he gave these up and now deals largely in manioc bread which he buys and ships to feed Leopoldville's native population. For the collecting and transportation of this bread to the railway station he has two trucks.

But what rejoiced Disu's heart on that particular Sunday was not the position of authority and wealth that he occupies

but the fact that they were dedicating to the God they once feared but now loved a new brick chapel ,into which he and his people had put their time, thought and money, along with their prayers.

Mr. and Mrs. Erickson of Sona Bata, Lewis Brown of Vanga, and P. A. MacDiarmid of Leopoldville were there representing the Mission; Kikwakwa and Bangu, who as boys sang the first Christian hymns in Boko, and who this year remember that it is just forty years since they were amongst the first converts to be baptized at Kifwa, were also present. These two and several others who have been pastors and teachers for over thirty years came to rejoice with their Boko friends.

The new brick chapel could only accomodate a portion of the audience at one time, so the people were divided into four groups, according to the churches they represented, and then each group, headed by the supervising pastor and band, playing mostly with homemade instruments such as flutes made from bamboo, drums made from hollowed tree-trunks with antelope skins stretched over the end, cymbals being pot-lids, and triangles from any old pieces of iron, entered into the building to participate in a hymn of praise to God and a prayer of dedication. It was a day long to be remembered by Chief Pierre Disu and his people; and to those of us who were present the words of the Book seemed to be fulfilled :

"They that honor ME I will honor."

PLANTING PEANUTS?

By Emily Keyes

SEPTEMBER is the month when the Vanga women plant their peanuts and pray for the rains to come so that they may have a good crop — enough for their family and some left to sell to others.

This is also the month when the women of Vanga village begin again to gather on Sunday mornings for Bible study. Last year they had had no class, as the missionaries were having enough difficulty gaining command of the Kikongo language used in all of our schools, and not enough time to study Kihunguna, the local language of the village people. This year, however, doors opened so that I dared ask some of the station women if they would be interested in case I should find time to prepare the lessons. Their answer was not overly enthusiastic, so I felt that I could take my time and let them know when I would be ready for the first class (and not be too disappointed if no one appeared, even then !).

But, two weeks later, one of the teachers' wives stopped me as I was going home from church and said in semi-joking indignation, "Where are you going? Last week we waited for you to come and teach us. Are you going to run away again today?" I was embarrassed by my lack of faith and preparation, and thrilled by their interest, more evident in deed than in word. I had to admit that I wasn't prepared that day, but I surely would be ready the next week.

A WOMAN'S PRAYER

The next week rain prevented many from coming, but even so, there were a faithful few on hand with their enthusiastic presence. The sunshine of the following week brought a roomful of eager students and on Communion Sunday, not only the station women, but also those from the surrounding villages — about two hundred strong so that I was almost overwhelmed with my struggling Kihunguna vocabulary. At the close of the lesson, I

told those who had not been present before that the station women meet every week, but that we expected the others to come only on Communion Sundays, as they have services in their own little churches in the villages three weeks out of four.

So, I was surprised again when the following week about thirty women from Vanga village were waiting with the station women after the church service. They were patient and helpful with my attempts in presenting in Kihunguna the story of the Prodigal Son. As it was a familiar story, they could fill in the gaps of my halting speech and grasp its lesson for our need for repentance, forgiveness and love.

As the lesson ended, I asked Mama Sala, who was sitting near, to lead in prayer. "Lord, our hearts are full of thanksgiving, as we know that we have been lost and that you have called us to be your childern not just your servants . . . Go with the one who has taught us, and help her to study so that she may teach us again next week. Help her with the language SO THAT SHE MAY PLANT YOUR PEANUTS IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE. Amen".

Had I been planting peanuts? Had she felt that I had been sowing seeds that would sprout and grow and produce a rich harvest, enough for them — and enough to share with others?

As I reflected upon her prayer, I was blessed and challenged. Challenged to search my thoughts, my speech, my actions, my use of time — to be sure that all of it would be fruitful. Are all of my peanuts good, or are there some wizened, rotten ones among the rest? A poor peanut cannot sprout, but wastes the energy of the sower and takes needless space in the soil.

Had the soil been prepared for the planting? Alongside the grandmothers like Mama Sala, there were some young faces in the class. Are they being cultivated day by day so that stones will not block the way of the sprouting seed as it works its way to the surface?

Of course, the sower has only a small part in the process of producing a crop of peanuts, although it is his responsibility to do his small tasks as well as possible. Just as the women had been rejoicing the week before with the arrival of life-bringing rains after weeks of dry weather — when they began to fear that their crop would be a failure — we too can rejoice as we see evi-

dences of vitality-laden showers in the lives of our people. The Lord of the harvest continues to provide that which is needful in answer to our prayers.

There are times, of course, when rains are scarce, when we are called upon to carry water so that the good seed which has been sown may not die before it has a chance to grow. Are there not times when young lives — or weaker older ones — depend on our response to the call of service in bringing the message that will bring refreshment and sustenance until the time when they will be fully restored by greater downpours of strength from the real Source. Even our little basins of water can be helpful during difficult times, and as we see the signs of new life and renewed strength, we ourselves are encouraged and strengthened.

IT IS PLANTING SEASON

Yes, this is peanut season, and all of us need help so that we may be prepared to do our share in the planting, or in the watering or in the harvesting. We need to be awakened so that we may see all the empty fields around us — and farther away — waiting for the seed . Some fields are waiting to be cleared and made ready, so that the peanuts will have room to grow. Other fields, already planted, are waiting for our little pans of water — carried every day — so that the planted seed may take root and stretch upward.

Each of us has a stumbling block to be removed, so that our path to the field may be straight and direct, so that we may not miss any of the places that are waiting for seed before weeds crowd in to take their place. Each of us needs to be strengthened so that we may surely arrive at the field where we are needed, and so that we may finish the job that we are called upon to do. Each of us needs to be supplied with healthy vital seed that will bring forth an abundant harvest.

Are you planting peanuts this season? May you, too, be made ready for your work so that you may plant His peanuts in the lives of people.

FAMILY WEDDING

By Martha Emmert

IN April, we in Congo were suddenly thrown into the glad confusion that follows the announcement of a coming wedding in the family. At once all our tired spirits began to soar in the happiness we share with Allan and Carrie and in the rare good fortune to enjoy such an event on the Mission Field. As for Carrie Sprague, the center of all this excitement, she suddenly found herself in the favored (or ill-favored) position of the youngest daughter of a big family whom everyone is determined shall have the best wedding available. She must have wondered many times whether we were more bother than blessing but she and Allan Stuart, the prospective groom, and hospital administrator at I.M.E., were wonderful in making us all feel a necessary part in their happiness.

None of us who attended that wedding at Léo on Friday, November 1, 1957, will ever forget the elegant simplicity of the service and the fresh loveliness of the bride. The fact that a storm broke just at the hour of service and involved a heroic rescue of the bride by Jerry Weaver in bare feet and raincoat only made Carrie's appearance more dramatic to the waiting throng of friends in the church and to the long-suffering bridegroom too. When the bride and her entourage were safely deposited at the door of the British Baptist Mission church, dry and unmussed, Mrs. Robert Bontrager of LECO began the most exciting of all marches and the wedding procession began.

The ministers took their places at the altar. Allan was escorted to his place by his best man, Alan Crumpler of BMS. The two ushers, Jerry Weaver of ABFMS, and Fred Drake of BMS took their places. The bride was preceded by her bridesmaids, Esther Greenmun from Kikongo, Emily Keyes from Vanga and her matron of honor, her sister-in-law, Janie Sprague missionary wife from the French Camerouns. The girls were attractively gowned in pink or blue net ballerina length gowns and carried pink carnations. Carrie's gown was styled for her by a sister-in-law in America, in cool white organdy over cotton sateen, with

princess lines, a lace yoke and mitts, and a lace cap which held a finger tip veil in place. She carried an arrangement of white flowers and red carnations. Her brother Wendell escorted her to the altar as her father would like to have done.

Lee Weaver sang, "O Perfect Love" and the Sona Bata choir sang a hymn in Kikongo. Then in the silence of the consecration moments, Orville Chapman sang "The Lord's Prayer". The marriage was performed by the Rev. John Morrison of APCM, former acting secretary of CPC, whose own life parallels that of the groom, in that he also was a Scotsman who met and married an American missionary girl. Ben Armstrong led in a short consecration message and prayer.

Missionaries from each of our stations were there to wish Carrie and Allan well, including all of the Leo and Sona Bata staff and all of the ladies from Banza Manteke. These, together with a host of Congolese friends and missionaries from the Brithis Baptist and other protestant missions gathered to greet the bride and groom at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. Thompson of the Congo Protestant Counsel. There we were recieved by the wedding party, Ben and Rhoda Armstrong as the *bride's parents* and Jeannette and Glen Tuttle as *parents* of the groom. Refreshments were served, the bride's cake cut, the groom's cake cut and telegrams of congratulations were read from friends and family in America and the British Isles.

After a race to the docks and clearance through customs, the happy couple were escorted to the ferry amid much laughter and showers of confetti. The moon was full, the ferry was deserted and the captain was soon in the spirit of the occasion. As they slid away across the Congo to Brazzaville all the deck lights winked off.

Our Dr. Carrie and her husband, now Mr. and Mrs. Allan R. Stuart, flew the following day from Brazzaville on their way to visit Allan's folks in Scotland, via Paris and London. Plans were to go on to New York in January. Our tribute to them can be best summed up by a letter from our mission secretary in regard to suggestions for their placement on return, "Every station I have heard from thinks they ought to come there."

HOUSE OF JOY

By Alice Jorgenson

WE have our beautiful, new hospital now and it seems as if we have always had it. But our thoughts frequently go back to a year and a half ago, when we were still treating people in the small dispensary and housing hospital patients in the smoke-filled grass huts. We thank God for the small beginnings that make us appreciate with greater depth that which follows and we pray that what we attempt may have permanence and usefulness, even as the new hospital is more permanent than the old dispensary.

Boko medical work had its beginning many years ago, when Tata Mac first toured the region and brought the Gospel to the Bayaka, heeding not only the command to preach and teach the Eternal Word, but also to heal the sick. A box of medicines and dressings packed alongside the Bible, has been used to open the way into many a heart. When people are sick in body it is not easy to sit and listen or to understand the Way of Life. When the body has been treated and well-being replaces fever and illness, then grateful hearts open and thoughts do not easily stray away from the message. After Kikongo Station was opened in 1929 the Smiths and later the Armstrongs made frequent visits to the Bayaka always carrying their box of medical supplies together with the Word for Spiritual healing.

So, as soon as the Robbins came to Boko in 1949 to start a Station, one of the first cries was for help for the sick. Helen Robbins helped many a sick baby or older person, bringing healing, comfort and confidence to their hearts. Never have we found anywhere in our Congo Field, more fetishes and witchcraft than among the Bayaka, but all their incantations and faith in magic was in vain. But the simple remedies given by missionaries brought quick relief and blessing and were a means of building up confidence. During the first years no nurse, either missionary or Congolese, was available and Helen Robbins carried on with courageous faith and fortitude. When the first Congolese nurse arrived he found the beginnings of a medical work. Gwladys Atkins made several visits to Boko and gave valuable help and

instruction as to the care and treatment of the sick. Later on Dorothy Wiseman spent six weeks working with the Congolese nurse in this new venture.

Soon a Baby Clinic was organized and babies from nearby villages were written up. Mothers found that babies need not die, even when burning up with fever, or in convulsions from intestinal parasites when suffering from Bronchitis or pneumonia. The small, new Mission Station became a place of help and hope for them, and many came to pray in the outdoor temple under the trees. This the ground work was done and all I had to do on my arrival in the Fall of 1954, was to carry on that which had been so well begun. We know that the difficulties we encountered were as nothing compared to those experienced during the early days, when medicines were few and equipment all but lacking.

During the time we worked in the old dispensary, with the grass huts ready to fall down, we felt cramped and many a time found it hard to go on. Where should one put contagious cases? Where put patients who were very ill? Many were hospitalized but unless they were dangerously ill they would not stay in bed. The grass wards were placed a long distance from the dispensary and we had no stretcher in which to carry patients. One man who was in coma for almost three weeks had to be fed artificially all this time and required special care day and night. Even when every precaution had been taken we found it impossible to carry out aseptic technique. Dust would filter down from the grass roof, cockroaches and other insects abounded; the beds made of sticks, were low and near the loose dirt floor, Privacy was difficult. People in other rooms would only need to poke holes through the grass partitions to look in and see what was going on. Smoke blinded our eyes as we worked for hours at a time with the very ill. Every little room had its fire on the floor to break the night's chill and dampness and for cooking on rainy days.

There was constant danger of fire with six tiny rooms under one roof, partitioned off by grass walls. One day I came in and smelled gasoline. Being guided by the odor I discovered the husband of one of my patients, who was the proud owner of a pair of black, wool pants, cleaning these in a basin of gasoline, while

fires burned brightly in all the other rooms. The gasoline had evidently been siphoned off from the Mission Truck.

Therefore it was with anticipation and longing that we watched the new buildings rise, grow to beautiful proportions and come to completion in a well planned well built hospital. And now having worked in it for more than a year, we never cease to be grateful for its spaciousness and permancy. Nor do we cease to be grateful to our Builder, who with great patience and skill worked under trying conditions, often lacking the quipment needed for a particular job, but with no lack of courage, making a dream a reality. Then we are ever thankful to the many friends in Christ, who by their gifts and prayers had a large share in making it possible. Many a times as I have talked with patients they have expressed their wonder and admiration, which perhaps amounts to a deeper appreciation than they could otherwise express. They come to receive help and go away to tell others.

Most of all it has been a "House of Joy" for young mothers, many of whom are too anemic to give birth to strong healthy children. They remain for weeks and even months receiving food, and the medicines most helpful to them, before giving birth to beautiful, healthy babies. In the beginning they were made to come, but now many come of their own accord and are grateful for all they receive. They have a lovely custom which I have not found elsewhere. When a mother is ready to leave the hospital with her new baby, she and the father if he is present, bring a gift of a few francs as a token of appreciation for the baby.

Babies are nursed for two or more years and during that time remain fairly healthy and gain more or less steadily. After that there is a struggle for survival as malaria, intestinal parasites, colds, ulcers, infections and burns vie with the efforts of the parents for the health of the child. Since most parents are very ignorent and superstitious, much that is done for the child, is harmful and many a promising baby does not have half a chance.

We pray that the Boko hosipital may be a "HOUSE OF JOY" to many in that they may experience the New Birth from hearing the World of Life given daily. We pray that all who come may go away with more than they sought, having yielded to the healing of the Great Physician.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LEDGER

By Jean Abell

PERHAPS you know the Chinese legend about the origin of skin color — how the Creator baked each people in His kiln, and the Chinese were the batch that came out just right. We have heard an African legend which seems to us ineffably tragic; it seems that God made His people out of dark clay and then dipped them in a tank of whitewash. The white peoples went in first — and finally, when the Africans' turn came, there was only enough left to dip the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet.

What a pitiful contrast in the two stories ! "We are the people who turned out just right." ... "We got cheated; there wasn't enough left for us." And this is an attitude that we see a great deal of here. It comes out in questions like, "Why is it that Europe has so many people and the Congo has so few?" and in a desire to have everything the white man has and do everything the way he does it. One missionary speaks of seeing two well-dressed young men sweating up a hot hill, doggedly carrying their suitcases European style. Yet the Congolese method of toting things on the head is so much easier and more practical, taking the strain off the shoulders, leaving the hands free for carrying.

This attitude is also expressed as, "You should give, and I should take, because you have so much and I'm suffering with hunger." The other day one of our students who has a new baby came asking to buy some of the hospital's powdered milk. The man on duty replied, "I can't do anything like that for you. I'm not white."

Fortunately, there is another side to the ledger, and here is an incident from it : A few months ago a sour-looking nurse came to us, having graduated from nursing school. He had schistosomiasis (a particularly nasty and stubborn parasite), his wife had schistosomiasis, his pant cuffs dragged an inch in the mud, he had a doubtful reputation. Six months later, he still has trouble with his pants, but he's one of our most dependable nurses, and the other day this conversation took place between

him and the doctor. A woman was being discharged from the hospital after a long illness, and her bill mounted up pretty high. "Do you think the family can pay it?" asked the doctor. "Well, her uncle had a long illness just recently. I think they've about scraped the bottom" ... "Suppose we stop the bill after twenty days. That cuts it almost in half. Can they pay it then?" .... "Well — *I'll* pay it for her and try to get it back from the family later." Please note : This is a country where (1) no one ever has any money by the end of the month; they spend it the first half of the pay period and pile up the bills the second half — and (2) a debt is considered the creditor's responsibility to collect, not the debtor's to pay, and may drag on for years.

If I could take you into a Congolese home at Sona Bata that most typifies this other side of the ledger, I think it would be Kimpiatu's. Kimpiatu is our most valuable nurse. His wife is a trained midwife, but does not work in the hospital now. They have four children — Patrick, 7, Charles, 5, and the twins, Samuel and Suzanne, 2. There will soon be another little sibling. If you go to their village in the afternoon, you will see Mama making manioc bread, preparing dried salt fish or greens, or perhaps running up a dress for the little girl on her sewing machine. She may have gone to the spring to get water. In the morning she would be away working in her garden. Kimpiatu says, "I have pity on my wife." He buys wood for her to cook with so she doesn't have to walk miles every day to find wood, cut it, and bring it home on her head. She also has a kerosene burner for jobs that require a quick, hot fire. She even has a refrigerator, bought second-hand.

It was missionary nurse Emily Satterberg who persuaded Mama that a wife should eat with her husband. Kimpiatu tells how happy this made him. When the work at the hospital is over, he comes into the yard, picks up one of the twins who come running to meet him, talks with an older boy. How different this is from the home where the husband devotes himself to hunting, eats with the men, lets his wife sleep out in the cook-house, takes no responsibility for his children; lives his own life without much thought of family. Kimpiatu's home is different for it "knows" Christ.

THE BELL

By Margaret Hall

THE bell in the church tower — what does it say ? Come to work, go to class, stop everything for moments of prayer and meditation, day is over — rest and sleep.

But sometimes it is tolled slowly and mournfully. Then the whole community gathers in the dispensary courtyard around a white draped box to share the grief of perhaps a father and mother for that dear little child so suddenly taken from them. Or it may be that thoughts are with the loved ones way off in some village, for the one called by our Father is a student far away from home. We are thankful that though our community is large the bell is not often rung in the minor.

Now and then the bell must be rung steadily and frantically — a distress signal, call for help. Where? What? Who? Perhaps the small child of a student has fallen in a 24 foot deep toilet hole. Then everyone gathers round. Ladder and rope — the child usually brought up needing only a bath and to be disinfected !

Or it may be that a meandering grass fire has sneaked up behind some grass-roofed student houses. A few weeks ago that is just what did happen, and since everyone was in class it had completely destroyed furnishing and belongings in one house before being discovered. A third house was seriously damaged before the fire could be extinguished. A dozen students suffered loss of clothes, books and other personal effects. The whole community to the rescue — a room here, a bed there, until the houses could be quickly renovated and refurnished. Then fund set up, donations from individuals and from the school to help most those who suffered most.

Once the bell spoke in no uncertain terms for still another reason, early one morning ,to say that there had been a theft during the night. Someone had broken into a missionary's house and carried off the safe containing school money. Had the thief hid it in the nearby forest? The student body was divided, search was made. But it was only some months later that the mutilated safe was found in "just-burned" grass. The thief had gotten away with the money.

But once the bell didn't ring. This is the story : A student father and mother had gone at noon to work in their garden, leaving their little son with an older child. Came time for children's afternoon class, so the older child left the younger alone, thinking the mother and father would soon be home. The little boy tired of playing alone and so set off. Where? Wait a bit.

The mother and father returned in due time. Not finding the child the mother thought the older one had taken him with her to school. But no, he was not there. Next a visit to neighbors, even a look in out-houses, had he fallen in? Parents becoming frantic. The bell must be rung to enlist the help of all. Word sent to the bell-ringer working in the print shop near the church. As he cut through the church to reach the bell, there on one of the front pews, the one where he was in the habit of sitting with mother and father, the "lost" boy fast asleep. The mother had often sent the child on ahead to church, and mother and father had always followed. In God's house he had nothing to fear. And so the bell didn't ring.

OBSERVATIONS AT EPI

By Elmer Hall

WE received recently 9 different kinds of ply wood from an American Belgian firm established a short time ago near the coast. The incredible beauty of some of these sheets of newly worked Congo hard-woods makes not only your mouth water but does something to your spirit. Even the young men of the industrial school gasp in amazement. These sheets might symbolize the Congo lives unrolling in sharp contact with the discipline, witness and teaching of the Gospel, revealing patterns of unexpected beauty :

Listen to Buhika's testimony as he entered seminary : "I had a good house and adequate salary as a teacher and was happy in my work. Then I began to be dissatisfied, something was wrong. I prayed about it and realized God was calling me to become a pastor."

Meet Dungu and his lovely wife and little son. Having

finished his course he taught one year at Kimpese before returning to Vanga. Then after a few years of experience and renewed contact with his people he hopes to return for pastoral training. His class of boys, all of them Christian, grew in grace, led by his wonderful spirit.

Observe the dignity and poise of the women leading the Women's World Day of Prayer service, and see in those girls who gave the pre-Easter pageant the brighter future for Congo woman hood.

Listen to Nlandu George's fine bass voice; as he sang, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"

Walk into one of the seminary classes and feel the concern of these men discussing the problems of building a real indigenous church.

See school children being baptized in a beautiful Congo stream, and listen as older boys come to give their testimony of desire for further training so as to serve God and their people.

The old fundamental conceptions back of animism are not lost over night, as comes up in many class discussions. There is still a great respect for dreams, drugs, divininations and deviltries. Yet there is definitely progress.

We are gratified that various E.P.I. trained men who had left the work of church and mission schools to obtain higher salaries in the centers have been dug out of clerical jobs and scores have been recruited for the new government public schools, where they find themselves far happier doing the work for which they were prepared. They discover themselves being called upon to give lessons in religion to their classes, after having said goodbye to this. We have had a full time missionary at the capital who supervises this teaching of religion to protestant children in the lay schools. Several of these teachers have repented and are coming clear on back to mission work.

Last Easter we were inspired by a group of our fine young men singing. "Jesus was victorious over sin and death; we too can be victorious." And may they all be victorious is our prayer, as we daily live and work with them, and try to lead them into a fuller knowledge of the abundant life in Christ.

—WHO HELPS HIMSELF

By Jessy Nkoba

WHEN the first missionaries arrived in the Lower Congo, they found the Congolese could neither read nor write. To preach the Gospel, these missionaries were confronted with many difficulties, since they could not speak the language of the people.

After several years, the missionaries decided to organize schools to teach the Congo population the three "R's" — reading, writing and arithmetic. But two problems presented themselves :

1. Who should teach? It was almost impossible to find time to teach. All the missionaries were overloaded with many tasks urgently calling for attention — exploration, construction of buildings, medical work, language study and care of their homes and gardens. Many of them died in the Congo. But these missionaries did not forget that education constituted a very important part of the mission work.

2. Who could help the missionaries in the schools ? It must be noted that in those days no one wanted to go near the white man.

Henry Richards, who earned the title of "Ngwankazi" or Maternal Uncle, was the first missionary to locate in the region of Banza Manteke in 1879. He began to redeem boys sold into slavery, such as Tata Joshua Wamba and others, and taught them. Some became pastors and gave a lifetime of Christian service. After that the schools began to multiply in the villages and new mission stations were established.

In 1909 the *Ecole des Pasteurs et d'Instituteurs* was created at Kimpese. Before 1940, the young students finishing existing primary schools were not much interested in entering this school for Pastors and Teachers, even though the instruction was free. But after that period, as *E.P.I.* received students from three missions, (ABFMS, British Baptist and Swedish Covenant) the number of students was limited only by the facilities of the school as students clamored to be enrolled even though now they must contribute toward board and tuition. (At the present time the participating missions must pay 1650 francs per year for each student accepted from his mission in the monitor's or normal

course and 2500 for each student in the theological course. The theological student receives free tuition and board, but students of the monitor's or normal section must pay 600 francs plus the cost of a school uniform to help with the cost of his studies.)

Since the parents of many students do not understand as yet the importance of education, or because their parents are dead or old and unemployed, certain students find difficulty in paying the fees as required by the school.

From time to time the Missions have helped these needy students with loans or gifts, but seeing the problem, we members of the Congolese Church and community have decided that the time has come for us, ourselves, to help our brethren of race to complete their studies. Thus we decided to create a fund for needy gifted students, the "*Fonds Des Mieux Doues*" to aid Protestant boys and girls who are unable to pay for their Secondary Education. This aid will be in the form of a loan accorded to students and will be returned by them at the end of their studies. As the capital in the fund increases, it could later be of service in aiding in the construction of school buildings for our Congolese children in the interior.

For the safe-guarding of the fund, it has among its councillors, Mr. DRALANS, Directeur of the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas at Léopoldville where the fund is kept; the Reverend DRAKE, British Baptist missionary and Monsieur QUENON of the Protestant Chaplaincy.

We have been tremendously grateful for the response from our Congolese brethren, many of whom have pledged the 100 franc per year membership fee; others more than that and still others who are in lower-paying jobs have pledged a partial membership fee. It is interesting that many who are contributing to the fund were never able to enjoy the benefits of Secondary Education themselves. We are thankful for the missionaries and other European friends who have also wished to help with the fund and hope that the interest of Congolese and European alike will continue. We wish to thank all our friends who have or who will be helping us and to express to them our best and fraternal sentiments.

AFRICAN SAFARI MISSIONARY STYLE

By Don and Bernice Niles

WHY don't you come on a trip with us to visit one of our church posts? Here is the equipment we must take, The longest case holds the beds, matresses ,and mosquito nets. The sack holds sheets and blankets, — yes, the nights can be quite cold. The other big box is the "chop-box", see the nested pots and pans, the compartments for dishes, silverware, towels and staples? This small box opens to show six shelves just deep enough to hold a tin. When all the shelves are full the case holds as many as 45 to 50 tins of food. Over there is the clothing box. Congo roads are too rough on suitcases. The square box is for the gallon water bottle. The tin trunk is for church and school supplies. Have we forgotten anything? Oh, yes, the folding table and chairs, and the pressure lantern. On this trip let us take the gasoline lighted slide projector. There is a sheet tucked inside for a screen. We have several Bible stories in film strip as well as slides of Moanza and its surroundings. Our people love to see them. You see that our one and a half ton truck is pretty well loaded already so let's be on our way. We have a 4 hour ride ahead of us over rough hilly country, but if you arent' thrilled with the scenery I'll be very surprised.

THE POST

Here we are at Kifunga with a cheering crowd of people descending upon us. Just clap your hands and say "*Moyo*" and you will have greeted them properly. Yes, that partly finished cement block building over there is the new church. It is taking a long time to get enough money together to complete it The two big mud and thatch buildings have two class rooms in each. The smaller houses are for the Pastor and teachers, and on the other side are the dormitories. This small house over here is for us. Ah, here are some clay jugs of water and some fire wood all ready for us. We'll clean up, set up our beds, and have something to eat. Then the crowd will have gathered to be examined for baptism.

EXAMINATION

It is too bad you can't understand the language, but I shall try to translate for you as much as possible. The ones we are going to interview have been taught by the pastor or village teachers and shoud be ready to be baptized. First we shall look at this man's "Inquirer's Card." You see, it shows that he has given no gifts for several months but has just paid fifty francs. We shall reject him without further examination, explaining that attendance and giving must be regular. One does not pay to be baptized ... Here is a woman whose card shows she has attended services and given her offering at every meeting for six months, so we will ask her a few questions ... In spite of nervousness she shows she knows the "catechism" becauses he answered correctly. Now we shall change the questions slightly to see if she understands what she has learned. "Why do you want to be baptized, Mama ?" "To receive Life !" "Does one receive Life through baptism?" No answer, "Why do we baptize people? "To save them !"... This is a misunderstanding we must guard against all the time; the tendency to expect some mysterious or magical change to take place at baptism. The pastor will take this woman aside and explain more carefully to her ... Here is a young man who shows more understanding. He said, "I want to be baptized as a testimony to others that I have left the old life, have been washed of my sins, and have been born again in Christ." His card is in order and the Christians agree that his conduct is good so we shall accept him and present his name to the church meeting this evening.

CHURCH MEETING

This is the monthly business meeting. The pastor is presenting the matters to be discussed.. Now he is indicating a man who has recently retired to his own village after many years of service as a teacher in another place. The man's wife has refused to return with him, although they have had seven children and lived together happily while he was teaching.. Their long dis-

cussion isn't really as heated as it would seem. Our people always talk with a great deal of spirit. The woman has finally admitted that she has been afraid that his people will harm her children with witchcraft, but now she has been persuaded to trust the children to the care of the Lord. These two were married years ago by native rites only and now they have agreed to have their marriage consecrated on Sunday morning and she will go with him to his village.

This second case is a man who is accused of looking for a second wife. He says his first wife has born him no children in five years and that she is not faithful to him. Divorce is permitted by the church only on the grounds of repeated adultery and evidently our committee does not feel that he has any proof for the charges he has made against his wife, so he has been told he must stay with her. We have told him also that they should both come in to see the doctor on his next visit to the station as he may be able to correct their inability to have children.

Now we have a woman who is asking to be returned to church fellowship. She was excluded from Communion a year ago because she let her elders persuade her to put a charm on her child when he was ill. She has shown a real spirit of repentance and her conduct has been good so she has been accepted. Incidentally, the child died.

Now the pastor is reading the list of those recommended for baptism. Evidently no one has any objections so baptism will be held early tomorrow morning . It is a twenty minute walk, part of it quite steep, to the water. You will understand why cleanliness is not a strong point of the people here when you see that all the water they use must be carried up that hill.

BAPTISM

Well, here we are. The stream is neither wide nor deep so part of the crowd can watch from the other side. Since there are seventy-five candidates today a visiting pastor will help the Kifunga pastor. A teacher will lead the hymns sung a verse at a time as the people enter and leave the water. You'll notice that the tall ones have to kneel in order to be completely emersed.

When the service is over all the youngsters will jump in to take a quick bath but even so they will probably be the first ones back to the village. When we are all back again the Morning Service will begin.

MORNING WORSHIP

What a contrast to some of the churches at home ! Every seat, every window and doorway filled, the chidren are all in their own service in a class room, and even so we can hear another group worshiping outside under a tree. You notice that the order of worship is similar to ours at home, the hymn tunes are the same, but there is no offering taken because all gifts were received and recorded yesterday. Probably you never expected to see a deaconness distribute the Communion Elements with a sleeping baby on her back, nor to see the Wine given to serveral hundred people from six glass tumblers several times refilled. Did you notice that they politely borrowed one of our cups and offered it to us first?

COME AGAIN

After lunch the pastor and teachers will probably stop in to discuss some of their latest problems. We'll give them all the advice and encouragement that we can. I have some clothing from White Cross to give them for their children to help them know that we appreciate their work. Then we'll be on our way. We hope that you have enjoyed this visit to Kifunga and that you will want to go with us again some time. We are sorry there wasn't enough time to let you visit some classes and introduce you to the school children. You would probably enjoy one of our Lay Leadership Institutes too. We must try to arrange an other trip at a later date. In the meantime, thank you for your interest and your prayers for our work. As you can see, your prayers are being answered and the Lord's blessing is being felt.

"..INTO ALL THE WORLD"

By Helen and Bill Robbins

THE long dry season is over and we live, as it were, in a new world. The earth, dead and dry and black-brown, has become vividly alive. Mountains and fields, hills and deep valleys are beautifully green. There is new joy and expectancy, and there is new vision and new confidence.

In a few months, furlough comes for us and work must necessarily be speeded up. All work must be in shape before it is handed over to the new missionaries, the Barnetts, who have recently arrived at Boko. There are so many tasks on every hand that we often feel bewildered and hardly know which to do first.

One work we are not neglecting. We are putting every minute possible into field evangelism. There is much opposition in the "established" part of our field and were it not for the love of Christ in the hearts of the people ours would be a lost cause. Some have yielded to pressure, but not many; and others are coming to join the fold.

The work in the newer area is progressing nicely. Some might wonder if we should open new areas in view of the difficulties in the "old." The Lord said, "I must go to other villages also." He also said, "Go ye therefore into ALL the world." When there are calls for help from everywhere, we cannot help but answer where we can.

It was because of such a call that we came to open the work across the Wamba River less than two years ago, Four young men were placed there as teacher-evangelists. Today three remain. Courageously they have pitted their strength in the Lord against impossible odds and have succeeded. People are listening to the Gospel. Many are being prepared for baptism and church membership.

One night, not long ago, Helen and I arrived at one of the set villages, by name Kingoma. The people came joyfully to greet

us. They crowded around our station wagon so that we could hardly get out until we had given them greetings. There was no place for us to sleep that night. We were offered a new house, the finest in the village, but the mud walls were still very wet, and we did not dare risk sleeping there. The thatched school was so open that goats and pigs could easily enter. We did not fancy being nosed by a friendly porker in the middle of the night, or scared awake by the bleating of a goat under our camp cots. We decided to sleep in the station wagon.

Many hands helped us to unload the car and carry the baggage into the school house. Our pressure lantern came out first. Our Protestant folk said to those standing by, "See this is the kind of a light that *we* use. Truly, it is a good light." Our dog "Laddie" trotted around in the crowd. "See," they said, "that is kind of a dog *our* mission has. Truly, he is a wise dog! He can chase a ball and bring it back to you. You should just see him jump in the air to catch the ball! He can shake hands. He is very obedient. He will not touch food placed in front of him until he has permission. He will lie down if you tell him to do so." Finally the air mattresses came out. They had not see these before and the excitement ran high. "See! See!" they exclaimed," the air is going into them. Truly, this is the best of mattresses. This is what *our* missionaries sleep on." Boasting? Yes. But forgive them. They have very little to boast about and this is really quite harmless. They have had strenuous trials this year from the opposition. The chieftess of the village, though a Catholic, has always been kind to us, and is a fine woman.

Finally we asked the folks to leave us, for we were tired and needed supper and rest. Before they went to their shelters we prayed and sang their new song : *Tula meso kwa Yesu* (Turn your eyes upon Jesus.)

From then on the night was quiet, though the bright moonlight made sleeping in the car difficult. On the morrow we started a busy day of examining candidates for baptism. How they prayed at the early morning service! At two o'clock we were ready with five candidates who had given testimonies showing that they were ready for baptism. The baptismal pool was some

distance away. The sun was hot. The way was dusty and the narrow path descending far below to the distant valley was steep. Our knees shook as we reached the grassy banks of the small stream. Tiny sweat flies were thick along the way and mingled with the perspiration of our faces and necks. But once in the valley we saw towering all around us high rolling hills beautifully gowned with fresh spring-like green.

But look at the people gathered at the pool! Many do not know how to read, but on their faces there is trust and the understanding of what Christ did for them on the Cross and in His Resurrection. Real joy is written on the faces of young and old — those who are to be baptized, those few who are already in the fellowship of the church, and a joyful hope on those who are still preparing. It has been worth the waiting. It has been worth the ridicule and persecution. With joy they sing :

What can wash away my sin ? Nothing but the blood of JESUS.

Baptism over! The final benediction over the flowing waters of the valley stream and the forty minute climb back up to the village is begun. The group gathered in the little school building New members were received into fellowship. Communion was served on very ordinary plates and in very humble cups on a table made of crude sticks, but it was the Lord table and He was there. A great day was drawing to a close. Five more souls were added to the little new church. Surely the angels in Heaven rejoiced!

NEWS NOTES

E.P.I.

SCOUT troups have been organized this year, a source of joy to primary school children and another area of training for Secondary and Moniteur students interested in various forms of youth work.

Land has been obtained at the Railroad center for construction of a chapel to serve the community. Construction will begin as soon as government permission is given. This church will also give to students in the Seminary opportunity for valuable practical experience.

A dream of many years had been realized in the arrival of the Claessen family. Students and staff alike are enjoying fellowship with this fine Belgian Protestant family. Three of the four children are enrolled for various courses in the schools of the station — Jackie in Secondary and Hélène and Jean-Louis in Primary. Mr. Claessen is teaching a full schedule in the Secondary School and Mrs. Cleassen has some classes in Music and French.

Ground has been broken for the Auditorium which it is hoped can be completed in time for 50th anniversary celebration in July 1958.

We have a possibility next year of having the power line come close so that we can pump water to our student villages, thus eliminating the temptation to bathe, wash clothes and soak manioc in the infected streams.

Banza Manteke

A gala Christmas was enjoyed at Banza Manteke as former staff members, the Murray Sharps and the Forcinellis and new missionaries Marnee Alsen and the John Rumohrs as well as Ken Wicklund of LECO, spent the holidays there.

Banza Manteke is looking forward to the planned visit of Congo Secretary James Sprigg in February and to entertaining the Congo Mission Conference and Conseil in April at their station.

In August our medical work was dealt a double blow when we lost (temporarily, we hope) both our nurses, within a week of each other. Both Rhoda Nielsen and Joy Ingalls had to fly back to the States for major operations and have not as yet received medical clearance to return. Both girls had been on the field less than a year, but were already deep in the work. For several months following their depature the large medical work at Banza Manteke — hospital, baby clinics, leper camp, maternity and several district dispensaries — had to be cared for by the Congolese nurses and the non-medical missionary staff with an occasional visit from one of our IME doctors. But near the end of December we were most pleased to welcome Esther Greenmun who will be acting nurse for three months prior to taking the tropical medicine course in Léopoldville in April and then leaving for home. All of us hope that a nurse may be found when the Conseil meets in April.

Vanga

The most recent census reveals that there are 6718 children in the district schools of the Vanga mission field, grades 2-6; and 9000 in the first grade of villages schools.

Léopoldville

A gift of appreciation was given at Christmas time to Ben and Rhoda Armstrong as an expression of thanks for their long term of service as Mission Secretary. It was with great regret that the Congo Mission learned shortly after Christmas that the Armstrongs would be terminating their service here earlier than expected because of the illness of Mrs. Armstrong.

EARN YOUR BIBLE

Doris Wiseman of Boko says, "You would laugh to see my lawn these days. It is packed with bucket shaped piles of humus and earth that school boys and girls are carrying from the forest to earn Bibles or to earn money to the Lord. The other night they were lined up by my house for two and a half hours buying their Bibles or giving their gifts." Though Doris had received "specific" gifts which could have been given outright to the children to buy their Bibles she felt they would appreciate them much more if they were earned, so she used the money in that way.

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Rev. and Mrs. Wesley Brown
Rev. and Mrs. Donald L. Ellis
Rev. and Mrs. Maurice S. Entwistle
Rev and Mrs. P. R. Lindland

IN U.S.—completing preparations for service in Congo:

Rev. and Mrs. Frank Andersen
Rev. John Marshall

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